8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
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421 the past nearly always expressed in terms of cattle and often on a conventional basis. Such articles were canoes and ivory bangles (though here the basic value of the ivory must be taken into account). These were of considerable value and, as will be seen, there were in the past scales of compensation demanded for their loss or misappropriation.

[439] (4) Imported articles, chiefly of iron, like fish-spears, iron spear-heads, hooks, iron hoes, &c. There were no iron smelters and few blacksmiths among the Nuer in those days. Iron wares were acquired from other tribes in exchange for cattle. These also had a conventional value and, in traditional legal processes, a conventional rate of compensation (*cut*).

We see therefore that there were various categories of chattels or movable property, some of which (those in the first category) had no definite or standard value because they were so easily obtainable; others which had exchange value, but no conventional rate of compensation for loss in excess of the exchange value (those in the second category); still others which had not only high exchange value in terms of cattle but also rates of compensation for loss, usually far in excess of that value (those in the third and fourth categories). The reason for the heavy damages demanded in such circumstances is discussed later. It may be noted here that it was partly due to the economic advantages obtained from the article (hoes or fish-spears for example) and hence the economic disadvantages caused by its loss, for it could not be easily replaced. Although actually held by an individual, the advantages applied to other members of his community, who would therefore assist him to obtain redress. Moreover, since it was initially purchased with cattle, kinsmen who had interests in those cattle would also have interests in the article.

[424] Finally another form of ownership, which must be mentioned in connexion with property relations, is possession of spirits or 'spirit medicines'. Certain kinds of spirits or medicines which have magical properties may be purchased with cattle. Such spirits are spoken of as being 'owned', but in contrast to more corporeal rights, they cannot be stolen because in the transference there must be some spiritual harmony between the two persons concerned, and the appropriate ritual must be performed. The nature of these spirits is discussed in a later chapter.

Changing Values

421 178 436 These observations apply to the past. Clearly concepts of property relations are undergoing swift and radical changes in Nuer society today. The introduction of a money economy in itself is bound to have repercussions on ideas of property and ownership. Most articles can be bought for relatively small sums of money, and money can be

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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regarded as quite independent conceptions. We must distinguish here between class names and individual or personal names. The reason why Nuer divide the spirits into kinds, spirits of the above, spirits of the below, *colwic* spirits, *bieli*, and so forth, is that they regard them as different sorts of manifestation of Spirit and of varying degrees of importance. This is a matter I discuss later. It is rather the individual names with which we are immediately concerned.

The reason why some of the refractions have distinguishing names is, I think, mainly a matter of ownership. We have seen that, in the sense already defined (p. 44), Spirit can be owned by persons. Now, no one in this sense owns God, but all the various spirits may be owned by persons; and it may be said that the most distinctive naming of them is where individual ownership is most marked, in the case of the spirits of the air and the fetish spirits, which have proper names and ox-names. A prophet who is inspired by Spirit has in the logic of the situation to give it a name which distinguishes it as his particular spirit from the spirits of other prophets of his neighbourhood who are his rivals for renown and influence; for the attachment here is to individuals who build up through it a personal following, and not, at least primarily, to social groups. When a spirit falls from above and enters into a man who becomes its prophet it attains individuality by revealing through the prophet what it is called—its name; and when a person becomes possessed for the first time the immediate endeavour of his neighbours is to get the spirit to reveal its name when he is in a dissociated state. The spirit gets its name, the *numen* gets its *nomen*, by being owned by the person it possesses and to whom, by possessing him, it brings power and prestige. Fetishes are also owned by individuals who compete, though in a different way from prophets, for prestige and power against one another, so they must have distinguishing names. Thus it is through the name that ownership is established. The individuality is, in a sense, that of the person and not that of the spirit, the spirit getting its name through him.

The conclusion we have reached is that the conception of *kwoth* has a structural dimension. At one end Spirit is thought of in relation to man and the world in general as omnipresent God. Then it is thought of in relation to a variety of social groups and activities and to categories of persons: to political movements